

Planning and Sage Grouse: “This is not Business as Usual”

What we'll talk about tonight:

- ▣ The reasons why BLM and FS are conducting planning for sage grouse conservation
- ▣ Why we are working proactively to keep sage grouse off the endangered species list.
- ▣ What the major threats are to sage grouse.
- ▣ What BLM's policy statements say about sage grouse conservation (and what they don't say)
- ▣ How you can provide your input to the process

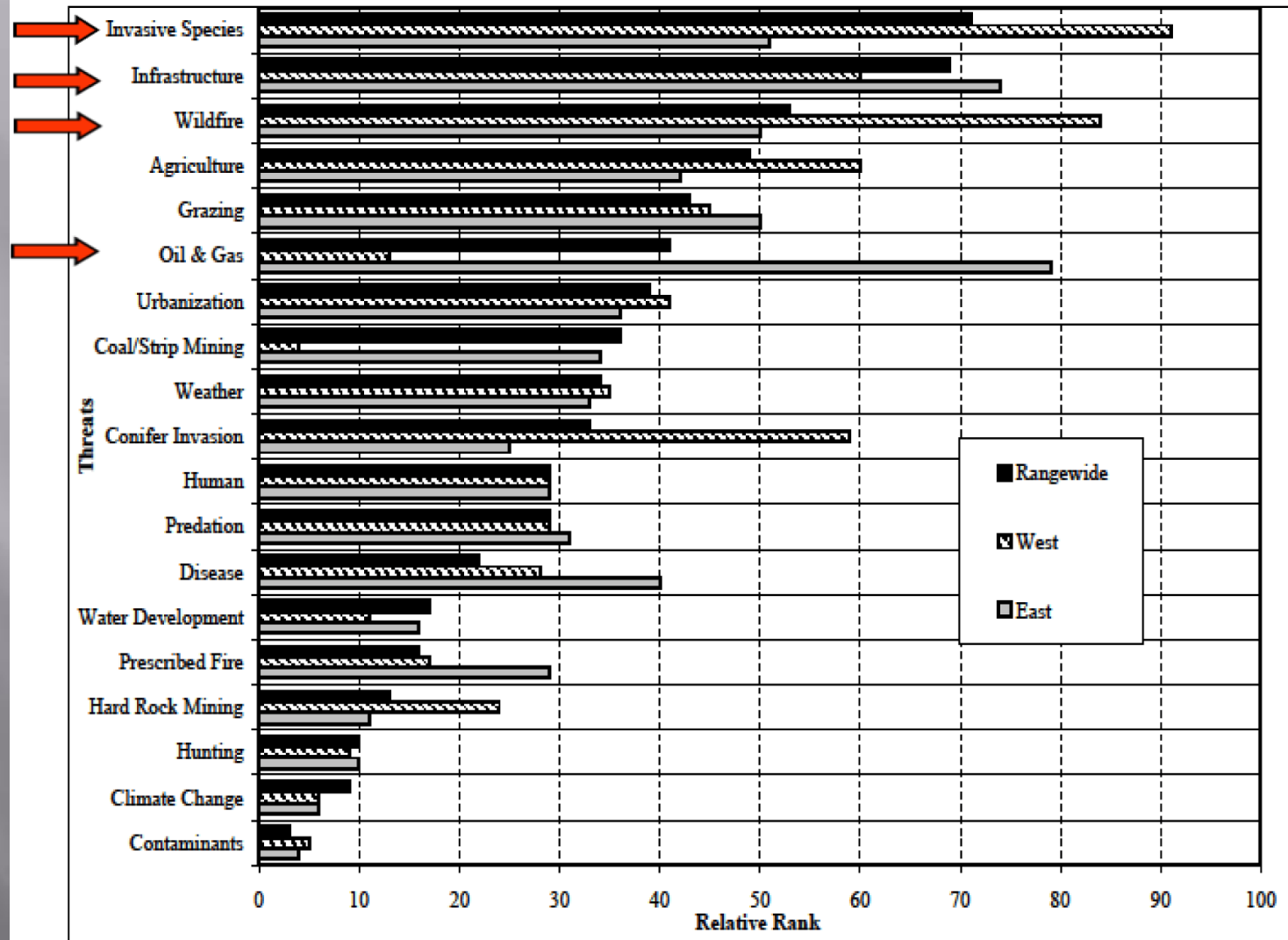
BLM's Sage Grouse Planning Efforts

- How we got here:

Petitions to the US Fish and Wildlife Service to list the Greater Sage Grouse under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- Finding in 2010 of Warranted but Precluded
- Placed on the Candidate list until fiscal year 2015 (12 month review starts in September 2014)

Threats to Sage Grouse



Why Not Allow SG to be Listed?

NOT LISTED

- BLM policy: ensure our actions do not contribute to the need to list a species.
- Conservation Measures are discretionary and may be tailored to local area considerations.
- Authorized actions may take a little longer, but not as long as consultation would
- No restrictions on private land
- Conservation is the RIGHT thing to do.

LISTED UNDER ESA

- ESA: Consult on any discretionary actions that are authorized, funded or carried out, ensure species is not jeopardized and critical habitat is not modified.
- Conservation Measures are mandatory to minimize “take”
- Actions will require at least 135 days to complete consultation
- Private land actions may require preparation of HCP.

BLM's Sage Grouse Planning Efforts

- ▣ Purpose of the Planning Effort:
 - Provide the “regulatory framework” described by the USFWS as necessary to preclude listing under ESA
 - Amend 68 land use plans covering BLM administered public lands within the range of Greater Sage-Grouse.

- ▣ Open public process
 - Public comment period open through March 23, 2012
 - Provide comments by email to: sagewest@blm.gov
 - Provide comments by Fax to: 775-861-6747
 - Provide comments by mail to:
 - Western Region Project Manager, BLM Nevada State Office, 1340 Financial Blvd., Reno, NV 89502

Two Planning Instruction Memoranda

BLM Instruction Memorandum IM 2012-043

- Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures
 - BLM Policy and guidance on how to process land use authorizations, permits, etc. on BLM public lands
 - Temporary policy until land use plan amendments are complete in September 2014
 - Where we are starting from

BLM Instruction Memorandum IM 2012-044 and NTTR

- BLM Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Planning Strategy
 - BLM guidance on how to conduct land use planning
 - Includes sage grouse conservation measures and BMPs
 - Based on best available scientific information
 - Forms the basis for where we are heading, but includes options for locally modifying conservation measures.

Livestock Grazing Comparison: IM2012-043 and NTT Report

IM 2012-043

NTT REPORT

Ongoing Authorizations

- Prioritize monitoring to ensure compliance with term permits and ensure rangeland health standards are being met.
- Drought – Evaluate season of use and stocking rates, adjust thru coordination and annual billing.
- Habitat Improvement Projects – Evaluate fences and watering facilities for impacts on sage grouse

Ongoing Authorizations

- Incorporate SG objectives into allotment management thru TPRs. Determine if rangeland health standards are being met. Manage for veg composition consistent with site potential. Evaluate season of use, numbers and type of livestock, stocking rates, and intensity thru grazing decisions, agreements, conservation plans, TPRs, etc.
- Drought – Develop specific vegetation management objects after rangeland health evaluations. Ensure post-drought rest occurs to allow vegetation recovery
- Habitat Improvement Projects –Mark, move or modify fences and watering facilities to reduce impacts to sage grouse

Locatable Mineral Comparison: IM2012-043 and NTT Report

IM 2012-043

Ongoing Activities:

- Request that holders of Notices and Plans of Operation modify their operations to avoid or minimize adverse effects to sage grouse or habitats. Compliance is not mandatory.

Proposed Authorizations / Activities

- Require new notices and plans of operation include measures to avoid or minimize adverse effects to sage grouse and habitat. Ensure compliance with 3809 regulations to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation.

NTT REPORT

- Propose withdrawal from mineral entry based on risk to the sage grouse and its habitat

Ongoing Activities:

- Existing claims would be subject to validity patent exams or buy out.

Proposed Authorizations / Activities

- BMPs mandatory in plans of operation prior to surface disturbing activities.

Take Home Messages

- ▣ There are likely to be changes in the way BLM manages sage grouse habitat. 68 BLM resource management plans will be amended over the next two and one half years.
- ▣ We can and should implement discretionary conservation measures to prevent sage grouse from being listed
- ▣ The current direction is towards the conservation measures and BMPs in the NTT Report.

Take Home Messages

- ▣ If you would like to have input into what conservation measures will apply to sage grouse habitats in Elko County:
 - Provide comments by email to: sagewest@blm.gov
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 - Provide comments by mail to:
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